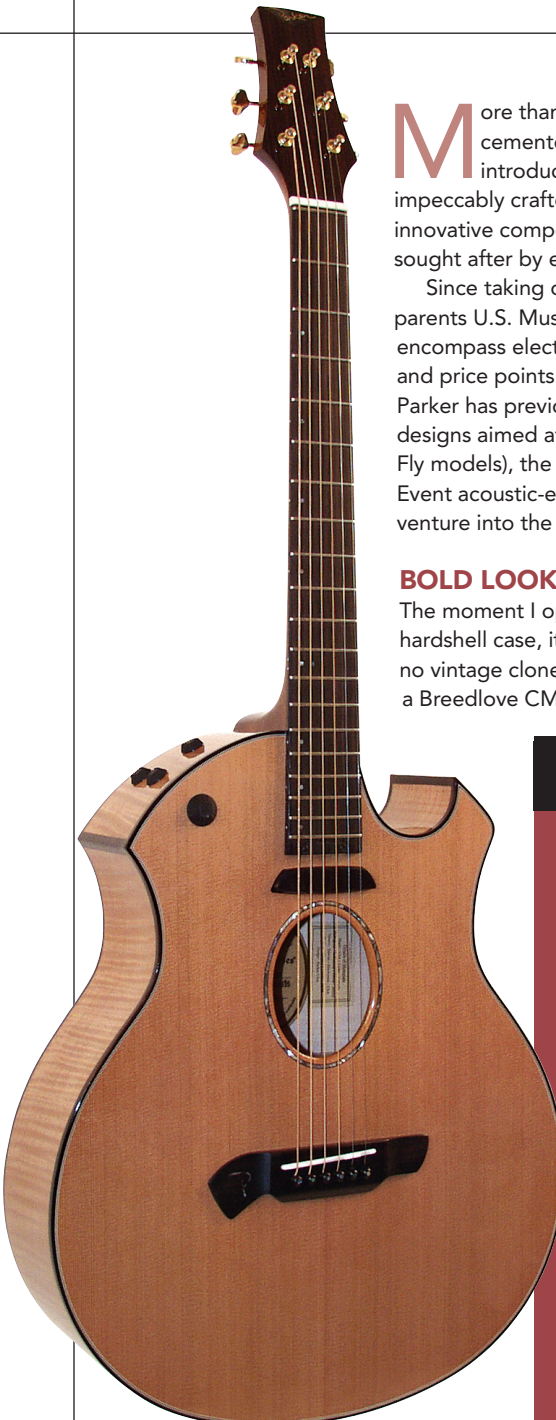


Parker P8E

After stirring up the electric guitar world with its radical design ideas a decade ago, Parker has now introduced a postmodern flattop with custom electronics to entice acoustic pickers.

by Michael Millham



More than a dozen years ago, Parker guitars cemented a spot in electric guitar history with the introduction of the lightweight, responsive, and impeccably crafted Parker Fly. Though expensive, these innovative composite-and-wood guitars quickly became sought after by electric stylists in many genres.

Since taking over the helm of Parker guitars in 2004, new parents U.S. Music Corp. have rapidly expanded the line to encompass electric guitars in various new shapes, formats, and price points to reach a wider variety of players. Though Parker has previously produced two innovative solid-body designs aimed at the acoustic crowd (the Bronze and Nylon Fly models), the launch of the new hollow-bodied Parker Event acoustic-electrics heralds the company's first full-on venture into the conventional acoustic guitar marketplace.

BOLD LOOKS, CLASSY CRAFTSMANSHIP

The moment I opened the Parker P8E's suede-finish hardshell case, it became apparent that this guitar is no vintage clone. The guitar vaguely reminded me of a Breedlove CM-series body, but with a squared-off

cutaway that would be right at home on a shredder's electric. Control knobs on the face and side combine with a magnetic pickup embedded between

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the fretboard and the oval soundhole, an homage to the company's electric roots. When it comes to wood, however, the P8E is all about unplugging, with a handsome cedar top—sans pickguard—and gorgeous flamed-maple back and sides. The low-profile neck is topped by a bound ebony fretboard with dot position markers front and side. Fit and finish are generally excellent, with flawlessly aligned seams, well-crowned

At a Glance

Parker P8E

HIGHLIGHTS	A postmodern grand concert body with good balance and tone. Great-looking woods and craftsmanship, versatile electronics.
THE SPECS	Solid Canadian cedar top. Flamed-maple back (solid) and sides (laminated). Rosewood binding. Ebony bridge and fretboard with dot inlays and zero fret. Abalone rosette with matching backstripe. 5-piece mahogany and maple neck with dovetail joint. Polyester finish. Grover open-back tuners. 25 1/2-inch scale. 1 11/16-inch nut. 2 1/8-inch string spacing at the saddle. Custom Fishman electronics consisting of a magnetic humbucking pickup, an undersaddle Matrix pickup, and an internal preamp with controls for volume, bass, treble and blend. Made in China.
WATCH FOR	Fretboard may be a bit narrow for some fingerpickers. Lack of pickguard could make the cedar top subject to pick wear.
THIS IS COOL	Radical looks. Pleasing sound and feel, both amplified and unplugged. Balanced XLR output.
BEST FOR	Anyone who wants a modern looking acoustic-electric that will plug directly into almost anything.
PRICE	\$1,999 list/\$1,399 street
MAKER	U.S. Music Corp.: (800) 877-6863; www.parkerguitars.com .